

Message Text

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R 280859Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY RABAT
TO USICA WASHDC
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AMCONSUL TANGIER

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 RABAT 2506

USIAC

E.O. 11652: N/A

SUBJECT: ASMAR/TALMS EXTENDED BICENTENNIAL SEMINAR: APRIL 26 P.M.
CLOSING SESSION

1. IN FITTING CULMINATION, AT ONCE FESTIVE AND HISTORIC, TO ASMAR EXTENDED BICENTENNIAL SEMINAR ON 1943-56 PERIOD OF U.S.-MOROCCAN RELATIONS, CONFEREES MET WITH MOHAMMED LAGHZAOU, LEADING (IN SOME WAYS LEGENDARY) FIGURE OF MOROCCAN NATIONALIST MOVEMENT. OVER LATE EVENING MOROCCAN-STYLE BANQUET, REplete WITH ANDALUSIAN MUSIC, IN PICTURESQUE RESIDENCE OF CHERIF OF OUEZZANE APRIL 26, LAGHZAOU (WHO HAD TRAVELLED FROM FEZ ESPECIALLY FOR OCCASION) ELABORATED ON HIS EXPERIENCES IN BOTH MOROCCO AND THE U.S. DURING THE PRE-INDEPENDENCE PERIOD AND RESPONDED TO VARIETY OF QUESTIONS FROM (RICHLy CARPETED) FLOOR.

2. LAST SESSION OF ASMAR SEMINAR DEVOTED PRIMARILy TO PERSONAL REMINISCENCES OF PARTICIPANTS AND OBSERVERS, INCLUDING WILLIAM HERWOOD, GORDON BROWNE, DR. LEON BLAIR, MEHDI AND DRISS BENNOUNA, STANLEY KARNOW, DR. MOHAMED ABOU-TALIB, AND DR. BENJAMIN RIVLIN. MATERIAL, INFORMATIVE AND FLAVORFUL BUT PURPOSELY "UNFOCUSED,"
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HIGHLIGHTED AMONG OTHER THINGS OBSERVATION BY MEHDI BENNOUNA THAT HE HAD ENCOUNTERED SIGNIFICANT SUPPORT AMONG CERTAIN BLACK AMERICANS IN THE U.S. FOR THE CAUSE OF MOROCCAN INDEPENDENCE. THESE BLACKS HAD DISCOVERED A LONG-STANDING BUT LITTLE-KNOWN CLAUSE OF AN EXISTING TREATY BETWEEN MOROCCO AND THE U.S. UNDER THE TERMS OF WHICH NO MOROCCAN WHOSE SKIN COLOR WAS DARK COULD BE SOLD

INTO SLAVERY IN THE U.S. TO AVOID SLAVERY, THE ANCESTORS OF THESE BLACKS HAD CLAIMED MOROCCAN NATIONALITY, AND THEIR PROGENY HAD EVEN FORMED A MOROCCAN-AMERICAN ASSOCIATION IN CONNECTICUT WHERE, ON CERTAIN EVENINGS, THEY GATHERED TO RECITE THE KORAN AND HOLD MUSLIM PRAYER MEETINGS (SOME OF WHICH BENNOUNA ATTENDED). MEMBERS OF THE MOROCCAN-AMERICAN ASSOCIATION WERE OF GREAT ASSISTANCE DURING DEMONSTRATIONS IN NEW YORK AT THE U.N. FOR MOROCCAN INDEPENDENCE.

3. ON A SUBJECT OF CONTINUING INTEREST TO CONFEREES-- THE MOROCCAN OFFICE ESTABLISHED IN NEW YORK -- MEHDI BENNOUNA WENT ON TO SAY THAT THIS OFFICE WAS THE FIRST NATIONALIST ORGANIZATION ESTABLISHED IN THE U.S. AT THAT TIME, AND THAT "BY ITS SUCCESS, IT ENCOURAGED THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SIMILAR TUNISIAN AND ALGERIAN OFFICES IN THE U.S."

4. LATE IN THE SESSION, DR. BENABDELJALIL, FORMERLY MINISTER OF EDUCATION AND NOW RECTOR OF MOHAMMED V UNIVERSITY, PRESENTED TO THE SEMINAR HIS BEST WISHES ON BEHALF OF THE UNIVERSITY, AND OUTLINED IMPORTANCE HE ATTACHES TO THE ESTABLISHMENT AT THE HISTORIC AMERICAN LEGATION IN TANGIER OF A "CENTRE DE DOCUMENTATION" WHERE SCHOLARS AND INTERESTED LAYMEN CAN RESEARCH THE ORIGINS AND CONTINUING EVOLUTION OF MOROCCAN-AMERICAN RELATIONS. HE CALLED ESTABLISHMENT OF SUCH A CENTER "ESSENTIAL" AND PLEDGED HIS UNIVERSITY'S BEST EFFORTS TO ITS SUPPORT.

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5. PROF. ABOU-TALIB, TASKED WITH FORMULATING A SET OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER ACTION, PRESENTED TO THE SEMINAR A LIST OF SOME TWENTY PROJECT PROPOSALS, INCLUDING:

- PROVISION FOR STUDENT RESEARCHERS TO USE ASMAR RESOURCES;
- SENDING OF YOUNG MOROCCAN POLITICAL SCIENTISTS TO U.S. TO WORK AS STAFF ASSISTANTS;
- EXCHANGE OF JOURNALISTS; AND
- NUMEROUS RESEARCH PROJECTS SUCH AS A DETAILED ANALYSIS OF MOROCCAN-AMERICAN RELATIONS SINCE INDEPENDENCE, THE ROLE OF U.S. TRADE UNIONS IN MOROCCAN INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT AND A RIGOROUS STUDY OF ACHIEVEMENTS OF MOROCCAN OFFICE IN NEW YORK.

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ASMAR PRESIDENT ELMANDJRA SUGGESTED THAT A COMPLETE LIST OF RESEARCH TOPICS BE DISTRIBUTED WIDELY IN MOROCCAN UNIVERSITIES SO THAT INTERESTED STUDENTS COULD CONTACT ASMAR FOR FURTHER ASSISTANCE. IN HIS CLOSING REMARKS, ELMANDJRA WENT ON TO SAY THAT HE WAS AWARE OF FACT THAT, IN ORDER TO BE ACADEMICALLY VIABLE, THE PRESENT SEMINAR'S SUBJECT MATTER WOULD NEED THE CONTINUED RESEARCH AND SUPPORT OF ALL SEMINAR PARTICIPANTS AND NUMEROUS SUBSEQUENT SEMINARS. NEVERTHELESS, HE ADDED, THE SEMINAR WAS A "WONDERFUL BEGINNING."

6. IN FRIENDLY BUT POINTED REMARKS DIRECTED TOWARD TALMS REPRESENTATIVES TULL AND BLAIR, ELMANDJRA SAID THAT TALMS WOULD BE JUDGED IN TERMS OF ITS SERIOUSNESS AS A "SISTER ORGANIZATION" BY ITS CAPACITY TO PERFORM AS SOMETHING CONSIDERABLY MORE THAN AN "HONORIFIC ASSOCIATION CREATED FOR THE BENEFIT OF THOSE WHO SIMPLY LIKE MOROCCO." ELMANDJRA SAID THAT HIS READING OF TALMS STATUTES LED HIM TO BELIEVE THAT MORE THAN THIS WAS ENVISIONED FOR TALMS, AND THAT HE HOPED EVIDENCE OF TALMS' COMMITMENT WOULD BE FORNE OUT BY A CONFERENCE IN THE U.S. SIMILAR TO THE ONE IN TANGIER WITHIN A YEAR. ELMANDJRA, SUPPORTED BY MOROCCAN COLLEAGUES (WITH ASSENT FROM MOST AMERICANS
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PRESENT), MADE IT CLEAR THAT HE EXPECTS THIS TO BE MAJOR TALMS PRIORITY IN COMING MONTHS.
7. FINAL ASSURANCES BY ELMANDJRA THAT ALL SEMINAR PROCEEDINGS WOULD BE PUBLISHED IN DETAIL AFTER HAVING BEEN REVISED AND APPROVED BY PARTICIPANTS AND OTHER SPEAKERS LED TO READING OF DRAFT TELEGRAM TO

KING HASSAN II IN WHICH SEMINAR PARTICIPANTS COLLECTIVELY EXPRESSED HOPE THAT WORK OF ASMAR WOULD "ACCORD WITH YOUR MAJESTY'S INTENTIONS IN PROMOTING WARMEST POSSIBLE RELATIONS BETWEEN U.S. AND MOROCCO."

8. THOUGH SEMINAR WAS FORMALLY ADJOURNED AT 7:00 P.M., FAREWELL BANQUET IN CHERIF'S RESIDENCE IN FACT PROLONGED PROCEEDINGS WELL INTO NIGHT, WITH LAGHZAOUI AS STAR PERFORMER. LATTER OUTLINED HIS ROLE IN MOROCCAN NATIONALIST MOVEMENT FROM TIME HE FLED FRENCH CONTROL TO GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE. ALONG THE WAY HE CONTRIBUTED FASCINATING BITS OF PETITE HISTOIRE, AMONG THE MORE NOTABLE BEING THE OVERSEAS TELEPHONE CODE HE USED WITH HIS BROTHER IN FEZ (JOINT OWNERS OF A TRANSPORT COMPANY, THE BROTHERS USED VEHICLE VOCABULARY, BUS SCHEDULES, ROAD CONDITIONS, ETC. TO TRANSMIT INFORMATION TO EACH OTHER) AND THE RATIONALE UNDERLYING THE LOCATION OF THE MOROCCAN OFFICE AT A SUTTON PLACE ADDRESS IN NYC (" WE HAD TO APPEAL TO A CERTAIN TYPE OF AMERICAN PUBLIC, AND TO DO THAT YOU CAN'T WORK OUT OF SOME SHABBY NEIGHBORHOOD").

9. CONSENSUS OF ALL CONCERNED IS THAT TWO-DAY SEMINAR HAS BEEN NOTABLE SUCCESS, EXCEEDING MOST OPTIMISTIC EXPECTATIONS. ASMAR/TALMS CONTACTS CONDUCTED AROUND EDGES OF THE EVENT MAY WELL PROVE AS USEFUL AS THE SEMINAR ITSELF AND PROVIDE PROMISING LEADS FOR ONGOING WORK OF BOTH ORGANIZATIONS. AS FROSTING ON A VERY RICH CAKE, SEMINAR ATTRACTED MAJOR COVERAGE IN MOROCCAN MEDIA, SIGNIFICANT UNCLASSIFIED

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ASPECTS OF WHICH FORTHCOMING IN SEPARATE WRAP-UP REVIEW. RENTSCHLER

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